

# MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

## Success Stories from the Field

### Lumbermen's Building Center

#### Washington Manufacturing Services

#### Lumbermen's Building Centers' Employees Build A Lean Enterprise

**Client Profile:**

Lumbermen's Building Materials-Truss Plant, located in Spokane, Washington, manufactures wood trusses. The truss plant has 20 employees.

**Situation:**

Lumbermen's truss plant felt that lean manufacturing could help it increase productivity by reducing non-value-added changeover time. The company brought in the Washington Manufacturing Services (WMS), a NIST MEP network affiliate, to teach its employees the basics of lean.

**Solution:**

WMS assessed Lumbermen's current status and improvement goals and conducted an improvement project based on lean manufacturing improvement principles. Among the many lean principles Lumbermen's employees learned were workplace organization (5S), visual controls, point-of-use storage and delivery, and changeover reduction. In the course of their training, company employees generated many ideas about what areas of the plant offered opportunities for improvement and how best to apply lean principles to institute lasting results. At WMS's behest, Lumberman's prioritized the best employee-generated ideas and implemented them in conjunction with lean manufacturing techniques. Lumbermen's achieved its goal of reduced changeover time, as well as reaping many other benefits for the overall operation.

**Results:**

Reduced assembly changeover time by 50 percent.

Reduced hardware inventory by 70 percent.

Implemented point-of-use delivery of hardware.

Established new procedures, area maps, and visual controls.

Developed a new equipment downtime data sheet and cross-training matrix.

**Testimonial:**

"People were hesitant and skeptical at the beginning of Washington Manufacturing Services' training, until they saw the potential from this program. It emphasizes teamwork as opposed to individual performance, and it creates a new attitude among employees."

Tim Borg, Facility Manager

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